Who is the National Association of Social Workers?

The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) is the largest membership organization in the US for professional social workers, serving 130,000 members. NASW-PA is one of the largest state chapters with nearly 5,000 members in Pennsylvania, and works to enhance the professional growth and development of social workers, create and maintain social work standards, and to advance sound social policies.

What are We Advocating For?

NASW-PA is currently advocating for House Bill 390, which focuses on the importance of certification for school social workers. The need for social services in schools is as strong as ever. Certification for school social workers ensures educational quality, professional standards, and accountability. All of these lead to better outcomes for students, and better services provided. See the back of this sheet for more information on why HB 390 is an important piece of legislation!
Certification for School Social Workers

Bill Summary:
This legislation will update the Pennsylvania School Code to include a certification that permits a professional to provide social work services in school districts. Currently, social work is the only developmental service in the school code that does not correspond with an education specialist certification category. Certification for school social workers would ensure educational quality, professional standards, and accountability, all of which lead to better outcomes for students, and better services provided in schools.

Key Points to Consider:
1. The need for social work services has been recognized by many school districts. Some school districts employ school social workers while others utilize the services of contracted social workers through the Student Assistance Program.

2. Social workers provide invaluable resources in school environments often providing critical mental health and case management services to children and their families.

3. Having social workers on staff allows guidance counselors and school psychologists the ability to focus on their designated roles rather than having to expend countless hours providing mental health, case management, crisis intervention, and referral services for children in need of additional assistance.

4. While there are many school employees who operate with the title of “School Social Worker,” there is no such employee according to the PA School Code.

5. Social work services are included in the PA School Code as “student services.” Section 12.41(e) in the PA School Code states that “persons delivering student services shall be specifically licensed or certified as required by statute or regulation,” but there is no corresponding certificate for school social workers.

6. This legislation is in no way a mandate and would not impact the designation of the Home and School Visitor, which currently exists in the school code.